

Letter from Alexander Graham Bell to Mabel Hubbard Bell, July 22, 1895, with transcript

ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL TO MABEL (Hubbard) BELL Beinn Bhreagh, C. B. Monday, July 22, 1895. My darling Mabel:

I love you very dearly — but — but — how can I make you believe it at a distance of thousands of miles — with silence as my spokesman. Distance dampens correspondence. How impossible to ask a question that I know cannot be answered — how tell you news that will be old long before you read it. A telegram is the only thing that seems alive — but cablegrams cost something — and two cablegrams I sent to “Lebam, Paris” were returned with the endorsement “telegram undelivered — party unknown” — Can it be that you only registered that name for a short time — and that the time is up? I reached home Sat. night — sick and tired out. Had a lively time at Flint — Gallaudet having made a most outrageous personal attack upon me and my work for the deaf. I was in good company though — the Oralists also — all — all of them were bad wicked people! — and the A.A.P.T.S.D. — good gracious — such an infernal society evidently never existed before! — with its propaganda of “pure oralism.”

The Address was simply “bosh” — to excite the passions of the deaf. Convention was largely packed with adult deaf-mutes from Illinois, Ohio and Michigan — about a hundred deaf-mutes alone — enough — to swamp the votes of all the Supts. and Prins. present.

I lived at the Bryant House. About a mile and a half from the Inst. Breakfast was brought into my room at 8 A. M. — 2 and I was at the Institution soon after nine — remained there until after supper — then returned to hotel where I entertained (smoking) teachers and principals till about 2 A. M. Heat tremendous — external and internal (infernal). From Flint went to New York to meeting of Board of Directors of A.A.P.T.S.D.

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Took along copy of Gallaudet's paper. Your father just raged over it.

I am seriously troubled about Gallaudet — fancy he is not quite sane upon the subject of Bell and the A.A.P.T.S.D. Don't think that any man in full possession of his senses would have written that Address. I really do believe he is suffering from Mono-Mania. At least that is the most charitable way to look at the matter. There has been insanity in his family — I understand.

From New York went direct to Colonial Beach. My Father and Mother both well — and enjoying the heat that bathed me in perspiration and “prickly heat”. Have had prickly heat eruptions continuously for a fortnight — and have only now got rid of the trouble — in the cool air of lovely Beinn Bhreagh. Fire in the Hall every evening. Mr. Lyon has accompanied me here. Katie is cooking for me — and Florence McInnis waiting on table.

Instead of writing to you yesterday as I intended — I started on Mr. McCurdy's laboratory work — making curves of his figures — Didn't get to bed till four in the morning. Been hard at work at laboratory all day. Tired out — can't write any more — please excuse this poor scribble — and believe that in spite of silence — like the grave — I love you dearly.

Your loving husband, Alec. P. S. My passage is taken for the third of August, on board the Burgogne for Havre. Telegraphed “Lebam” this morning. Hope you will receive cable. A lot of letters from you just received. They bring sunshine into my loneliness — but make me ashamed of my own non-epistolary qualifications. Two letters just received in an unknown hand from France, which turn out to be letters — from Daisy! The first letters from her I remember ever to have received! Made me feel that I am not quite forgotten by you all. I love both my little girls very much. (They will always be “little” to you and me) — and hope to write to both — but now I must rest. I have been under a great strain for a long time — and am now feeling the reaction.

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A.G.B.